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MASKS

JEAN GUIART: *Mythologie du masque en Nouvelle-Calédonie*. 150pp. Paris: Musée de l'Homme.

When the time eventually comes at which social anthropologists, or those who continue in the traditional preoccupations of their discipline, find themselves in the position of classical scholars today, and similarly obliged to rely exclusively upon literary sources of evidence, the ethnographic corpus on New Caledonia will surely come to occupy a prominent place. Outstanding in this literature is the work of Maurice Leenhardt, and some of the most fascinating of this concerns the significance of the mask. It is this centrally important symbolic complex which Professor Guiart has taken up again in his latest monograph.

As Bédouin has written, masks are connected not only with the representation but also with the exercise of power. Leenhardt has shown that in Melanesia there is particularly a connexion between masks and chiefdom. Professor Guiart sets out to demonstrate the factual and variant details of this connexion, and his thorough accounts, based on his own prolonged researches in the field, make a considerable advance on Leenhardt's more general conclusions. On the question of origin, he

argues that masks are as autochthonous in New Caledonia as elsewhere in Melanesia (contrary to Leenhardt, who thought they had been introduced by immigrants and adopted by the chiefs), and he relates their presence not only to local forms of political organization but also more essentially to mythical themes and beliefs concerning death and fertility.

The monograph is a very valuable addition to New Caledonian ethnography, but it is not likely to have a wide appeal among the general public. The author assumes that the reader will be familiar with Leenhardt's work, and a fair command of the ethnography is indeed a prerequisite for a proper understanding of Professor Guiart's new material. The exposition is for the most part baldly empirical, and more extensive analysis and more adventurous speculation would have been welcome. There is neither a table of contents nor (especially reprehensible in a publication by a learned society) an index, but the eighteen photographic illustrations of masks, especially the coloured ones, are splendid.

SWORDS

JOHN WILKINSON LATHAM: *British Military Swords from 1800 to the Present Day*. 91pp. Hutchinson. £3 3s.

Mr. Latham has written the first book devoted wholly or mainly to the history of the British regulation military sword to appear since the publication of Boulton and Hopkinson's *Sword, Lance and Bayonet* in 1938. This last, though undoubtedly useful, is full of inaccuracies, and students and collectors have long felt the need for a really sound and scholarly work on the subject. It would be pleasant to be able to record that Mr. Latham's book answers this need but, unfortunately, it cannot even be said to make a serious attempt to do so.

The fundamental weakness lies in the author's apparent failure to appreciate the importance of sound documentation in a work of this kind. Time and again he states that a particular pattern of sword was introduced as the result of a particular order, but only very occasionally does he give any evidence in support of his identifications, many of which are not by any means beyond doubt. To take one example only, the stirrup-hilted infantry sabre that appeared

at the beginning of the nineteenth century is described as "a completely new sword for Infantry Officers introduced by an order on March 18, 1803. No supporting evidence whatsoever is given for this identification, even though most authorities regard the sword as one that was used almost exclusively by officers of Flank Companies and as Mr. Latham himself points out without explanation, a specimen was presented to Colonel Arthur Aylmer of the 1st Battalion Light Infantry on July 12, 1802, more than seven months before the order "introducing" the pattern was promulgated.

In the book's favour it can be said that it includes very useful sections on the history of the nineteenth-century sword scandals, the manufacture of swords, methods of supply (including reproductions of some hitherto unpublished makers' marks), and government specifications for swords. It is also extremely well produced, with a really excellent series of half-tone illustrations, mostly of sword-hilts, and one colour plate.

UNIFORMS

P. H. SMITHERMAN: *Infantry Uniforms of the British Army*. Second series, 1790-1850. 22 plates. Hugh Evelyn. £3 15s.

Mr. Smitherman has given us a second volume on the uniforms of the British Army, the first having covered the development from the

Restoration to the first quarter of the eighteenth century. It is admirably introduced by the artist with a brief summary which covers a great deal of ground besides that of uniforms, looking back to the American War of Independence and to Waterloo. There are twenty attractive colour plates of officers, non-commissioned officers, and private soldiers.

One interesting feature is that though all the plates reveal clothing reasonably adapted to active service, these were to be the last for a long time of which this could be said. The influence of George IV was malign from this point of view. His artistic spirit, so interesting in civil life and extending from support of literature to the Brighton Pavilion, led him to introduce uniforms which may have been beautiful but were wholly unsuitable even in time of peace, to say nothing of active service. His brother, William IV, was as the result of naval experience before he ascended the throne, less interested in the Army, but he continued this wretched policy.

As might be expected, the officers look less suitable to take the field and perhaps live in mud than the rank and file, though the latter are no better off in the Guards. There is a plate of one of the Grenadier Company, Coldstream Guards, whose headgear looks as though the mere puff of wind would blow it away, and one of the 13th Foot in the same danger. A private in the 57th Foot is very much better equipped. Mr. Smitherman has once again done a fine piece of work.

MAYAS AND TOLTECS

Ancient Oaxaca. Discoveries in Mexican Archaeology and History. Edited by John Michael D. Coe. Stanford University Press. London: Oxford University Press. £7 8s.

MICHAEL D. COE: *The Mayas*. Ancient People and Places. 252pp. Thames and Hudson. ALMA M. REED: *The Ancient Past of Mexico*. Foreword by Inesbela Dávalos Fariola. Hamlyn. £2 10s.

In the past twenty years or so startling progress has been made in the outlines of the history of ancient Mexico and Central America. New discoveries, such as that of the gradual domestication of maize in the valley of Tehuacan between 5000 and 4000 B.C., still arise to change the fundamentals of our understanding. With few written documents surviving and a population crowded, reduced and profoundly changed by the long centuries of Spanish dominance, the work of reconstructing the past has been the particular responsibility of archaeologists and those in related scientific disciplines, from palaeobotanists with their assessments of changing climate and ecology, to lexico-statisticians, who with the help of computers have traced back the relationships and divergences between surviving Indian languages.

In the three books under review attempts are made to arrange and explain the new evidence and fit it into existing knowledge. The first is a collection of essays, mostly about the Zapotecs and Mixtecs of the Valley of Oaxaca, and the place of Monte Albán in Meso-American civilization generally. It is particularly useful to have an English text of Dr. Jiménez Moreno's well-known essay "Meso-America before the Toltecs", which has so influenced thinking on the relationships between the different regional cultures. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of his thesis is his analysis of the successive catastrophes which overcame each regional society at the height of its sophistication. As he well says, if Cortés had arrived in 519 instead of 1519 he would have encountered a far more advanced and dynamic civilization. The collapse of Teotihuacan in the seventh century, whether from barbarian assault or from internal decay, led to a dispersal southwards and, as Mr. Paddock points out in his excellent essay on Oaxaca, the abandonment of the valley of Mexico. If this at first benefited Teotihuacan's neighbours—Monte Albán, El Tajín, Cholula, Xochicalco and even the distant Maya—they were nevertheless destined to go the same way. The reasons for the abandonment of the great cities and ceremonial sites are equally mysterious. Both Dr. Jiménez and Mr. Paddock are brave enough to speculate on this dangerous subject, and suggest social revolution against rural priests at a time of population pressure from within and barbarian pressure from without.

This brief reference to one great historical problem conveys no idea of the richness of this book in ideas, suggestions and new evidence, both general and minutely detailed. Dr. Alfonso Caso's essay linking surviving Mixtec genealogical codes with colonial documents and the results of recent archaeology is a particularly satisfying example of how ingenuity can surmount the great divide of the Spanish conquest and establish continuity of family tradition. This book is not for the uninitiated. None of the essays makes easy reading. Some are needlessly obscure and seem undirected to any particular purpose. Nowhere, for example, in Mr. Howard Leigh's essay on the evolution of the Zapotec Glyph C is there any suggestion of what it actually meant. The book consists essentially of chunks of raw material hewn from the cliff of historical research. The excellent pictures are sometimes so profuse that they break up the text they are supposed to illustrate.

Dr. Michael Coe's book on *The Mayas* is by contrast a highly finished production. From the time when Stephens and Catherwood first stumbled on the jungle ruins of Copán and Palenque, the Maya have exercised a particular fascination on scholars, travellers and romantics alike. Much nonsense has been talked about them—from their supposed trans-oceanic origins to their supposed mass migration from the Old to the New Empires. But although they may not have been the moderately peaceful people of legend, nor is first believed, there is still no question that in the classic Maya of the lowlands pre-Columbian civilization took its most advanced form. Their temple pyramids and palaces, surmounted with roof combs like the spines of prehistoric reptiles, their wall paintings, sculpture and polychrome pottery, their hieroglyphic writing, mathematics and elaborate intermeshed calendars, indicate the existence of a highly educated ruling class which over a long period was able to harness and direct the labour and energies of a large population. Like all other pre-Columbian societies, their religion was based on astrology, and from the need for accurate prediction of celestial events grew their astonishing skill and precision in astronomical observation.

The main virtue of Dr. Coe's book is that Maya civilization can be seen in perspective. The Maya borrowed much from the Olmecs, including possibly the idea of writing, and the Long Count calendar. The first flowering was not in the Mayan region proper but at Teotihuacan and the Puuc coast. In the early Classic period—between A.D. 300 and 600—foreign influences were evident,

from that of Teotihuacan in the valley of Mexico to that of the Maya in the Yucatán. Only in the later period—between A.D. 800 and 900—did the Maya develop a civilization of their own. The Maya, like the Aztecs, were a people of great ingenuity and skill. They were a people of great art and science. They were a people of great religion and philosophy. They were a people of great history and culture. They were a people of great achievement and greatness. They were a people of great glory and fame. They were a people of great power and influence. They were a people of great wisdom and knowledge. They were a people of great courage and bravery. They were a people of great strength and endurance. They were a people of great love and compassion. They were a people of great hope and faith. They were a people of great peace and harmony. They were a people of great unity and solidarity. They were a people of great justice and equity. They were a people of great truth and honesty. 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DEPRIVE AND CORRUPT

Sir, I have seen in neither the TLS nor the *Evening Standard* any attempt to distinguish the sexual from the brutal; yet unless this distinction is made, obscenity is rendered valueless. In the unexceptionable assumption that any piece of exciting writing, whether it describes the battle of the Pelennor Fields in Book III of *The Lord of the Rings*, the copulatory adventures of Fanny Hill, or the preparation of *homages de poulet Agnès Sorel*, does in fact excite, we have to decide what we find objectionable and what not. We have no qualms if the reader hears the martial clamour of trumpets ringing in his ears, nor if his salivatory glands work overtime. Why should we, no longer believing that sex is disgusting or that masturbation induces lunacy, be disturbed if what is on the printed page arouses strong sexual feelings and the desire for their gratification? Why should we be disturbed, indeed, by the gratification, whether it be auto-, hetero- or homo-sexual? Since Freud, we have learned to look askance at those who regard sexual activity as wicked. Brutality, not sex, is the theme, not the erotic, to defer to Wayland Smith, is the human activity that as social beings, we must be most concerned about; and it is this strain in our natures that the exciting writing excites, we are right to suppress, and indeed suppress, such writing whether the stimulation leads to the Derbyshire Moors or Daeuau.

There will be some who protest that more people have been killed by those influenced by the Bible than by those influenced by Sade. The latter may be drawn between such writing as presents the brutality as desirable or commendable, and writing which, while it might be referred to as justification for, e.g. smiling, Philistines, cannot be said to fire the reader with that glow.

On this text, *Fanny Hill* and *Last Exit* would be acquitted as *Ulysses* and *Lady Chatterley* were acquitted; and the works of Sade for some of them and Schleicher would be convicted, as they deserve. Would even M. Giraudis object then?

D. C. ROSE.
87 Avenue Road, St. John's Wood, London, N.W.8.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Sir—Mr. Empon's letter about *Troilus and Cressida* in your issue for March 2 continues the ancient error that the cancel fold containing the new title-page was substituted after the passage of some time. In *Studies in Bibliography*, volume I for 1949-50, Professor Philip Williams demonstrated conclusively that the cancel fold was, in fact, printed as an integral part of the lost sheet through the press, that is, of text. Indeed, since only three copies of text are known with the original uncancelled title-page, given the bibliographical facts about the printing of the cancelled title, it is probable that uncancelled copies are aberrant and no intention ever existed to place two issues on the market. It is likely that the only form ever intended for publication was that with the substituted title-page.

FREDSON BOWERS.
The University of Virginia, Charlottesville 22901.

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Sir—May I make a comment on Mr. David A. Randall's letter printed in your issue of March 9? The manuscripts of writers whose fame does not fluctuate may well fetch a high price whether published or not. The late George Sherburn thought that this was so and wrote as follows to the preface to his edition of Pope's letters: "To owners and especially dealers in autographs, his acknowledgements are made at the beginning of each letter, as a help to students and as an act of gratitude on my part. Almost without exception dealers have been ready to allow . . . transcripts to be made; and this in spite of the current tradition that such procedure cuts the money value of a letter. Having watched the prices of Pope letters now for twenty-five years, I should like to register the opinion that publication or other reproduction has far less bearing on the price of a letter than some imagine. If donors or owners have suffered financial loss through helping me, I am very sorry. They have been generous, and my hope is that interest in Pope, increased through this addition, may eventually reward them."

Sir—I am afraid Miss Coxhead labours under a misapprehension when she writes in the March 2 issue, "An American post-graduate student is permitted to work for a P.D. (which requires him to use original material) about three years earlier than would be the case in this country".

The average American student enters university at the age of eighteen and completes a four-year course for his Bachelor's degree. Those going on to postgraduate work then spend a minimum of two years doing course work before they begin their independent research.

In England the average undergraduate, who also begins his university course at eighteen, spends only three years at that level. With very few exceptions those going on to postgraduate work begin their independent research immediately on completion of their undergraduate course.

A small amount of research will show that the average for an American student beginning research is twenty-four as opposed to his English counterpart who is twenty-one. I would be the first to admit that chronological age has little to do with scholarly sophistication or the quality of his English and American students, as one who has been a postgraduate student in both the United States and England wish only to clarify this misstatement of fact.

GROFFREY TILLOTSON.
Birkbeck College, University of London, Malet Street, London, W.C.1.

THE ESSENTIAL HÖLDERLIN

Sir—The writer of your middle-page article (March 9) state in the concluding paragraph: "We may now look forward to further volumes containing greater plays—*Der Schwabe*, *Der Turm*, and the libretto for *Der Kain*—in May 1967." I point out that a third Höfmannsthal volume containing English versions of just those works—and others besides—appeared some years ago, under the same imprint and editorial hand, as the first two volumes. The volume in question is *Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Selected Plays and Libretti*, published by the Bollingen Foundation, (Pantheon Books, New York) in 1963, and by Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, in 1964. Whereas the earlier volume received many reviews—including one, in your columns, on October 20, 1961—*Selected Plays and Libretti* went almost unnoticed in this country.

Frans Kuna and by the writer of your article. What is more, Herr Kuna ignores the most substantial of T. S. Eliot's published references to Höfmannsthal, his Preface to *Poems and Plays*, and his *Note on "The Tower"*. These two places were originally one, and were intended to preface a volume of Höfmannsthal to which T. S. Eliot alluded. When it became necessary to devote a separate volume to the longer plays, T. S. Eliot's original Preface had to be divided. Neither this Preface nor my correspondence with Höfmannsthal with T. S. Eliot about Höfmannsthal's bear out Frans Kuna's assumption that Eliot was familiar enough with Höfmannsthal's works to plagiarize them.

Michael Hamburger,
34, Half Moon Lane, London, S.E.24.

The writer of your article also touches on parallels between works by Höfmannsthal and T. S. Eliot's verse plays, mentioning "resembling" *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. If he is referring to Frans Kuna's assumption that Eliot was familiar enough with Höfmannsthal's works to plagiarize them, I point out that T. S. Eliot never refers to Höfmannsthal's works, or to any such parallels as the one cited by

ANNALS OF LOCH CE
Sir—A recent bookeller's catalogue lists, at £18 15s., a reprint of W. M. Hennessy's edition of the *Annals of Loch Ce*, published in two volumes in the Lothian Series in 1871. Scholars are not usually numbered among the wealthy, and it should be pointed out that these same volumes were photographically reprinted for the Lothian Manuscripts Commission in 1939, are still in print, and cost a mere 30s.

GEORGE MAC NICOLL.
Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, School of Celtic Studies, 10 Burlington Road, Dublin 4.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

RATES: 5s. a line minimum 10s. per month 2s. semi display £3 5s. an inch. Display £1 an inch. House Space, London, L.C.C. 11th March 1967, extn 418. Telex 26222 J.

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PUBLIC AND UNIVERSITY APPOINTMENTS

BRITISH MUSEUM
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN, FIRST AND SECOND DEPARTMENTS
Applications are invited from persons qualified for a post of ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN.

Salary scale: £1,100 to £1,400 per annum. Applications should be sent to the Librarian, British Museum, 96, Tottenham Court Road, London, W.1.

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GALLERIES AND EXHIBITIONS

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